

## Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-08

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CU/AF:HHARDY (INFO)

INS:MR.BERTNESS (SUB)

USIA/IAA:RJONES (INFO)

----- 119122

O R 132158Z MAY 76 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LAGOS NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMCONSUL IBADAN

AMCONSUL KADUNA

AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CVIS, NI

SUBJECT: NIGERIAN STUDENTS IN US ALLEGE HARRASSMENT BY INS

REF: LAGOS 5571

SUMMARY: THE NIGERIAN EMBASSY HAS RAISED THE PROBLEMS OF NIGERIAN STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS RECENTLY WITH THE DEPARTMENT. THE EMBASSY APPARENTLY NO LONGER BELIEVES THAT THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN THE LEVEL OF INCIDENTS INVOLVING THE INS AND STUDENTS BUT INFORMS US THAT EXAGGERATED REPORTS OF SUCH INCIDENTS ARE CIRCULATING IN THE NIGERIAN STUDENT COMMUNITY AND ARE BEING ATTRIBUTED TO US/NIGERIAN POLITICAL DIFFERENCES.

AMBASSADOR SANU RAISED THE PROBLEMS OF NIGERIAN STUDENTS WITH AMBASSADOR EASUM AT LUNCH MAY 11 AND REPORTED THAT

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THE AFRICAN AMBASSADORS MIGHT RAISE THE PROBLEM AT THEIR

NEXT MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY. END SUMMARY.

1. NIGERIAN EMBASSY REQUESTED DEPARTMENT'S ASSISTANCE APRIL 30 IN LOOKING INTO REPORTS FROM NIGERIAN STUDENTS ASSOCIATION THAT ABOUT 25 NIGERIANS HAD RECENTLY BEEN ARRESTED BY INS IN SAINT LOUIS AND AN EQUAL NUMBER IN CHICAGO. EMBASSY SENT EMBOFF TO CHICAGO AND CONGENOFF FROM NEW YORK TO SAINT LOUIS.

2. WE RAISED THIS REPORT WITH INS WHICH ASCERTAINED FROM DISTRICT OFFICES THAT NO RPT NO CASES PENDING IN SAINT LOUIS AND ONLY TWO CASES IN CHICAGO. INS ADDED THAT A SINGLE NIGERIAN HAD BEEN ARRESTED IN SAINT LOUIS ON APRIL 19 AND THAT SIX OTHER NIGERIANS HAD BEEN ARRESTED IN CHICAGO DURING PAST SIX WEEKS. ALL EIGHT CASES IN CHICAGO RESULTED FROM INS COOPERATION WITH CURRENT TAXI LICENSING COMMISSION CAMPAIGN AGAINST ILLEGAL DRIVERS. INS VOLUNTEERED THAT 21 NIGERIAN, ETHIOPIAN, AND SIERRA LEONIAN STUDENTS AT LINCOLN UNIVERSITY IN JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI, HAD BEEN ARRESTED, FOR ILLEGAL EMPLOYMENT, BY THE KANSAS CITY DISTRICT OFFICE ON MARCH 1 AS A RESULT OF A COMPLAINT FROM THE UNIVERSITY. ACCORDING INS, ALL ARRESTED NIGERIANS HAVE BEEN OR WILL BE GIVEN VOLUNTARY DEPARTURE DATES WHICH, IN CASE OF MOST STUDENTS, WILL PERMIT THEM TO COMPLETE CURRENT SEMESTER.

3. WHEN DEPARTMENT (AF/W) RELAYED THIS INFORMATION ON MAY 3 TO NIGERIAN MINISTER-COUNSELOR (OBE) HE COMMENTED THAT THESE AND OTHER RECENT QUOTE DEPORTATIONS UNQUOTE CONSTITUTE QUOTE UNREASONABLE UNQUOTE INCREASE, AND THAT FMG COULD NOT BE BLAMED FOR ATTRIBUTING A POLITICAL MOTIVATION. HE SAID THAT QUOTE SOONER OR LATER UNQUOTE HARRASSMENT OF NIGERIAN STUDENTS BY INS WOULD HAVE TO BECOME TOPIC FOR GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT DISCUSSIONS. WE DENIED ANY HARRASSMENT OF NIGERIANS, AND SAID WE KNOW OF NO REASON WHY CURRENT LEVEL OF INS CASES SHOULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN NORMAL, AND UNDERTOOK TO FIND OUT WHAT STATISTICS MIGHT BE AVAILABLE. OBE PROMISED BRING DIFFICULT DEPORTATION OR VOLUNTARY DEPARTURE CASES TO ATTENTION OF DEPARTMENT AND TO LET US KNOW RESULTS OF INVESTIGATIONS IN SAINT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LOUIS AND CHICAGO. (OBE MENTIONED ONE VOLUNTARY DEPARTURE CASE HERE IN WASHINGTON BUT HAS TO DATE NOT COME FORWARD WITH ANY OTHERS.)

4. ON MAY 7, NIGERIAN EMBASSY AGREED THAT SAINT LOUIS REPORT WAS IN ERROR (THE JEFFERSON CITY INCIDENT WAS INTENDED) AND THAT THE NUMBER OF CASES IN CHICAGO HAD BEEN GREATLY EXAGGERATED. EMBASSY CLAIMED THAT IT HAD NOT YET

RECEIVED FULL REPORT FROM THE TWO CONSULAR OFFICERS SENT TO INVESTIGATE.

5. CONTRAST BETWEEN US AND NIGERIAN ATTITUDES TO THIS MATTER ILLUSTRATED WHEN DEPOFF IN SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATION TOLD OBE THAT INS RECORDS INDICATE THAT OVER 9,000 VISAS ISSUED TO NIGERIANS IN 1975 AND ONLY ONE-TWO PERCENT OF THIS FIGURE WAS DEPORTED OR GIVEN VOLUNTARY DEPARTURES DURING SAME PERIOD. OBE RETORTED THAT ONE PERCENT IS SHOCKINGLY HIGH AND PROVES DELIBERATE HARRASSMENT OF NIGERIAN STUDENTS BY INS. (FYI CONFIDENTIAL INS FIGURES SHOW 11 NIGERIANS EXCLUDED AT PORTS OF ENTRY, 48 DEPORTED, AND 106 GIVEN VOLUNTARY DEPARTURE DATES DURING FY 1975. END FYI.)

6. AT LUNCH MAY 11 WITH AMBASSADOR EASUM, NIGERIAN AMBASSADOR SANU AND OBE DREW ATTENTION TO REPORTS OF AN INCREASING NUMBER OF INCIDENTS INVOLVING THE INS AND THE NIGERIAN STUDENTS. SANU SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE EMBASSY'S INVESTIGATION HAD SHOWN THE INITIAL REPORTS REGARDING LARGE SCALE ARRESTS IN ST. LOUIS AND CHICAGO TO HAVE BEEN EXAGGERATED, THE MATTER WAS ONE OF CONTINUING CONCERN TO HIM AND TO HIS STAFF. IN RESPONSE TO OUR QUESTION, HE SAID HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT RECENT INCIDENTS WERE QUOTE POLITICALLY MOTIVATED UNQUOTE, BUT ADDED THAT RUMORS OF LARGE-SCALE HARRASSMENT BY INS WERE CIRCULATING IN STUDENT COMMUNITY AND BEING ATTRIBUTED TO US/NIGERIAN POLICY DIFFERENCES. HE TERMED THE LEVEL OF ARRESTS AND VOLUNTARY DEPARTURES AS UNACCEPTABLY HIGH. WE REPLIED THAT MANY OF THESE PROBLEMS COULD BE AVOIDED IF THE NIGERIAN STUDENTS HEEDED THE INSTRUCTIONS THEY WERE GIVEN WHEN THEY SECURED A VISA AND OBSERVED THE REGULATIONS OF THE SCHOOLS THEY ATTENDED. TWO PROBLEMS IN PARTICULAR BOTHERED HIM. FIRST, HE THOUGHT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FEMALE STUDENTS SHOULD BE GIVEN EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO FINISH THEIR STUDIES BECAUSE THERE ARE SO FEW EDUCATED WOMEN IN NIGERIA. SECOND, HE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT SOME CASES IN WHICH STUDENTS IN PROFESSIONAL FIELDS (E.G. MEDICINE) HAD NOT BEEN ALLOWED TO TAKE THE QUALIFYING EXAMINATIONS GIVEN BY THE APPROPRIATE PROFESSIONAL BODY. UNLESS THEY WERE QUALIFIED, HE SAID, THEY COULD NOT ACHIEVE THE NECESSARY PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION IN NIGERIA AND THEIR STUDIES IN THE U.S. WERE WASTED. HE DECLINED TO NAME SPECIFIC CASES. HE EMPHASIZED THAT IN HIS VIEW THE ACQUISITION OF AMERICAN TRAINING AND THE INCREASING POPULARITY OF AMERICAN EDUCATION AMONG NIGERIAN STUDENTS WOULD BE A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN NIGERIA FOR THE NEXT GENERATION. HE CONCLUDED THAT THE PROBLEMS OF AFRICAN STUDENTS HAD ARISEN IN MEETINGS OF THE AFRICAN AMBASSADORS AND THAT CONSIDERATION WAS BEING

GIVEN TO RAISING THIS SUBJECT WITH THE SECRETARY.

7. DEPOFF REMINDED NIGERIAN EMBASSY (AND YOU MAY WISH TO ADOPT SIMILAR POSITION IF ANY OF THIS SPILLS OVER IN NIGERIA THAT INS HAS LIBERAL POLICY TOWARD FOREIGN STUDENTS, USUALLY AVOIDS ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS AGAINST STUDENTS UNLESS COMPLAINTS RECEIVED. ENFORCEMENT IS RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH DISTRICT OFFICE. INS OBSERVES THAT SOMETIMES ACTIONS AGAINST ONE ILLEGAL ALIEN UNCOVERS OTHERS (ROOMMATES FOR EXAMPLE), AND IT THEN MIGHT APPEAR THAT INS IS SELECTIVELY ENFORCING THE LAW AGAINST ONE NATIONALITY.

8. NIGERIAN EMBASSY ADMITS THAT VERY LARGE PERCENTAGE OF NIGERIAN STUDENTS IN US ARE WORKING IN EXCESS OF LIMITS PRESCRIBED BY THEIR VISAS. EMBASSY MAINTAINS, HOWEVER, THAT INS IS ACTING ARBITRARILY OR DISCRIMINATORILY WHEN IT TERMINATES A VISA WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN OFFICIALLY ISSUED OR EXTENDED.

9. DEPARTMENT WILL FOLLOW UP ON NIGERIAN EMBASSY INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGED DIFFICULTIES IN JEFFERSON CITY AND CHICAGO. DEPARTMENT IS ALSO TRYING TO DEVELOP STATISTICS ON NUMBERS OF NIGERIANS OVER A PERIOD OF TIME WHO HAVE BEEN ARRESTED BY INS.

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10. FOREGOING PREPARED BEFORE RECEIPT REFTEL. SPECIFIC REPLY BY SEPTTEL.

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